



NEWS RELEASE

A Century of
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RECLAMATION AND KLAMATH WATER USERS ASSOCIATION TAKE ACTION TO MAINTAIN UPPER KLAMATH LAKE ELEVATION

Based on current hydrological conditions, Reclamation is notifying Fish and Wildlife Service that it is rescinding the “below average” water year type announced on June 13, and replacing it with a “dry” year classification. This notice applies only to the lake elevation requirements on Upper Klamath Lake.

This action is based on the latest Upper Klamath Lake inflow forecast by the Natural Resources Conservation Service and on information provided by the Oregon Water Resources Department which forecast flows remaining below 312,000 acre-feet, thereby meeting a dry year classification. Reclamation will now track Upper Klamath Lake elevation levels for the “dry” water year type as per the final Biological Assessment.

Klamath Project irrigators have taken action to reduce diversions by an average of 20 percent during the remainder of July and August. Diversions, which were running at 1,650 cfs or higher, will be reduced to an average of 1,350 cfs for the remainder of those months.

Reclamation is also notifying NOAA Fisheries that it has complied with the requirements in its Biological Opinion for the provision of a water bank. However, because of the severe change in climatic conditions, Reclamation will not be able to provide supplemental flows for the July and August time frame. Therefore, the river flows for remainder of July and August will be held to a “below average” year type requirement as specified in the NOAA Fisheries BO.

These actions are being taken as a result of the unforeseen change in climatic conditions that have reduced flows from springs and tributaries into the Klamath River above Upper Klamath Lake. Of principle concern is maintaining the target lake level elevation in the Fish and Wildlife Service BO for the end of July which is 4140.3 feet, and these reductions will keep the lake level at least 1/10th of a foot higher than the BO requires.

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Reclamation is the largest wholesale water supplier and the second largest producer of hydroelectric power in the United States, with operations and facilities in the 17 Western States. Its facilities also provide substantial flood control, recreation, and fish and wildlife benefits.